



North Indian Ritualistic Festivals and their Deliciousness

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Abstract:

North India is considered the birthplace of society and different religions. So it is very obvious to having a variety of rituals and related food habits. It is also because of the different geographical conditions that are from desert to great hills and hot to cold, every type of variety in weather can be found in such a small region of India. Jammu Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and the n Uttarnachal state are the six states, which make the North part of India. The traditions and cultures of celebrating a particular festival differs not only from state to state but also from the hilly region to the plains. A lot of festivals are celebrated in these ares with totally different food habits. Some of them are Taj Mahotsav, Urs fair, Cattle fare, Nagaur fair, Desert festival, Eid, Diwali, Lohri, Baisakhi, Teej, Lathmar Holi, Magh mela. All festivals having their different forms of food with different diliciousness and richness in nutrients.

Keywords: -Pulao, Lassi, Ghewar, Churma, Thali, Maas, Kachodi, Halwa, Kheer, Gair, Murga, Jalebi, Laddoo, Saag, Kebab, Malpua, Bhang.

Introduction:

North India represents the most-ancient Indus Valley Civilization of City-State. The Aryans followed by Huns and other tribes from Central Asia invaded this region. During their invasion they also established and developed their settlements. The Northern region was also invaded by the Greek and Afghans and made it their capital. The region adopted traditions and customs from these ethnic groups and thus celebrates and observes the events or festivals accordingly.

Events and festivals are held with much pomp and splendor in North India. North



India is considered to be a land of festivity. The festive events of North India include various ethno-cultural groups and the North Indians do not object or prevent the strangers from participating in their celebrations. Here are a few popular festivals and events held in the Northern region of India.

Taj Mahotsav, Agra:

Taj Mahotsav is held every year in the month of February in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. It is during the spring season that Agra looks colorful and the colors of celebration spread everywhere. It is a ten days celebration, which includes the rich heritage of arts & crafts, culture, dance & music and cuisine of Uttar Pradesh.

This festival is also popular for food also. Agra's world famous meals are Chicken Tandoori and Zafrani Pulao. Samosa is the most popular snack in North India and it cook with variety of pastry stuffed with potato, cheese, mushroom, chickpea or even minced meat. For cooking, peanut oil is the most popular one but coconut and mustard oils are also popular in this region.

Agra is also known for sweets, which are very delicious and usually made of milk. The staple beverage is tea and lassi around fair. Tea also has spices such as cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and ginger, and large quantities of milk and lassi consists both flavours i.e. sweet and salty. Coffee is another popular beverage here with some edited methods. The most famous alcoholic beverages in Agra are palm wine which is called Indian beer and fenny.

Urs Fair, Ajmer:

Urs Fair is celebrated in Ajmer, Rajasthan marking the death anniversary of Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti - the great Sufi saint. Followers from different communities visit the shrine, by the lakeside city of Ajmer, during the first six days of the 7th month called Rajab; according to Islamic Calendar. Visitors can enjoy the Qawwalis and Mushairaas during Urs.

In the Urs Fair of Ajmer, cuisine has wide variety of items, which include both traditional and new dishes. Some of the most food items that people of Ajmer love to eat are Dal Baati Churma, Ghewar, Bajre ki Khichdi, Rajasthani Pulao and Gatte ki Sabzi. All these dishes are traditional and are available throughout fair. The new dishes added to



the festival are mostly the modifications done to the traditional food of Rajasthan. Ajmer thali is one of their trademark and a way to show hospitality to the tourist that visit in fair. The mughlai cuisine is the only thing that is different in Ajmer in terms of food. The high number of Muslim population has made this place one the best city that serves non-vegetarian food. The famous non-veg items that are served Lal Maas, chicken or mutton curry, chicken or Mutton biryani and sula kebabs. To get the best of these items, one should visit Dargah Bazar, it is the main market where most of the non-vegetarian food is pre paired by the Muslim community only.

The street food of Ajmer is filled with different cuisines. You will get Chinese, Italian or continental on the street food, which are worth a try. The most common snack the locals love to have in evening are kachodi kadhi and sohan halwa. People also visit dargha bazaar to have the kebabs and tandoori non-vegetarian items. Such diversity in street food has made Ajmer quite famous in all Rajasthan.

Though you can get these items in all Rajasthan, but the flavour that you will get in fair is the best. sohan halwa and biryani, these items have the best taste in all fair and have become the specialty of the Ajmer city. You can get kachori and sohan halwa at any restaurants or on stalls on the street. To get the best biryani one must visit the Dargah Bazaar.

Cattle Fair, Pushkar:

Pushkar Cattle Fair is regarded as the largest camel fair in the world. It is held in Pushkar, Rajasthan. This fair is known worldwide for holding cultural significance. It has a wonderful location with valleys, hills and deserts. This fair is held on Karthik Shukla Ekadashi according to Hindu calendar in the month of October or November every year. Many cultural activities are held and several stalls are organized for shopping during the fair.

Pushkar, the land of culture, spirituality and heritage offers a great time to food loving people, as one can taste various varieties of vegetarian food. Sampling all the delicious Rajasthani dishes along with the traditional Indian street food will stimulate the taste buds of every individual. Being a very famous Hindu pilgrimage destination drinking alcohol and eating non-vegetarian food is strictly prohibited, but one can taste



all other delicacies. The food is served with a royal reception in a very comfortable environment every traveler can enjoy the lip smacking Rajput dishes and the Rajasthani Thali.

Another interesting fact about Pushkar is that one gets a chance to taste innumerable dishes made in traditional style using all local ingredients during the time of the fairs and festivals. The stalls around the fairgrounds offer the chat food, snacks and many more interesting items. Foodies can enjoy the attractive charm of the bustling city and the lakeside by tasting the excellent local and street food.

Nagaur Fair

Nagaur Fair is considered as one of the largest cattle fair within the country that exhibits cows, camels, bullocks and horses. It is held in Nagaur, Rajasthan. This fair is well known for its trading of various animals. Nagaur is a place that is located between Bikaner and Jodhpur organizes this fair from late January to Mid-February.

The cuisine of in the fair Nagaur is mostly a reflection of the food as found in the other states of Rajasthan. The typical Marwarhi food is found in most parts of the Nagaur during fair. The Daal Batti churma is one of the traditional as well as famous dishes found here. For those who love sweets, a number of good options in Rajasthani sweets can be easily seen here.

Desert Festival, Jaisalmer:

Desert Festival is held in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan that brings back life to the Thar Desert. During the trip to the rich cultural heritage in Rajasthan, experience the Desert Festival. Gair and Fire dance are considered as the major attractions of this fair. Snake charmers, puppeteers and acrobats also participate in the fair along with the folk performers. Camel rides, camel dance and camel polo are the popular activities among the visitors. Mr. Desert contest is organized during the fair, which adds charm.

Jaisalmer is a desert spot with age-old culture and tradition. The cuisine of Jaisalmer is unique when compared to other spots in Rajasthan. Jaisalmer cuisine mirrors the richness in their culture and their closeness to the desert. You can easily find a rich wholesome meal here. Unlike other parts of Rajasthan, Jaisalmer does not rely more on oil or butter. You can find many dishes with shredded vegetables. Desert ingredients like beans, capers



and spices are commonly used in this cuisine.

The spiciness of the dishes is moderate and thus, you can enjoy many items here without worry. If you have a sensitive stomach, you can request for a milder version. This place is famous for sweets. Bhang is a local drink made using edible cannabis. It is legal here and cannot be taken back to other place or to other states.

Top dishes to enjoy in Jaisalmer are; murg-e-subz, ker sangria, kadi pakora, bhanonloo, mutton saag, masala raita, dal bati choorma, mughal chicken recipes, panchadhari laddoos, local styled lassi, poha, jalebi, kachori, ghotua, bhang (only for adults and legal food) that cannot be taken to other states or countries.

Eid ul Fitr:

Eid ul Fitr, which is one of the major festivals of the Muslims celebrated in all over India and other Muslims countries of the world. In the northern part of India, this festival is celebrated with much enthusiasm. The Muslim culture in its purest form can be experienced during this time. The date of Eid-Ul-Fitr is generally decided on the basis of viewing crescent moon according to the Muslim calendar. It marks the end of Ramadan- the fasting season of the Muslims through celebration and feast.

Eid is considered one of the most important festivals for the Muslim community around the world and also in India. Muslims used to dressed up in their traditional style, and attend community prayers in the morning in Masjid. They used to visit friends and family, and exchange sweets. Children and other Youngers are often given idi in the form of money or gift by their elders and loved ones. It commemorates the ending of the holy month of fasting called Ramadan. Eating mouth-watering meals always breaks this fast. Most popular dish among Muslims is the Nawab Biryani on the occasion of Eid. This Biryani is tagged as 'Nawabi' and any other some imperial words for the reason being its rich taste.

Diwali:

Diwali, the festival of lights is celebrated all over India with pomp and splendor. Diwali is one of the most popular festivals of North India. On this day, people worship and offer prayers to Goddess Lakshmi. It is marked with new dresses, lamps and lights, crackers, varieties of sweets and gifts. Stage shows and drama are also organized in societies and



colonies. Thus all these together make a stunning celebration.

The holy city of India, Varanasi is known as a land of festivals. During Kartik Purnima in between November and December, Deepawali is celebrated which is considered as a visual delight for the spectators. On this full moon night, the ghats of Varanasi looks sparkling as it is ornamented with earthen lamps which are then gently left on the River water and allow them to float. Tourists and visitors from all over the country to attend this spectacular event through the place.

Diwali is a festival, which is considered the occasion of exchanging sweetness and smile to the family and friends. Different types of snacks used to cook at home or to be purchased from decorated markets. There used to a huge variety from jalebis to gulab jamun, shankarpali to kheer, gajar ka halwa to kaju barfi and many more. Some more special foods cooked at home, which are to be presented while worship, in front of God are kheer and halwa.

Lohri, Punjab:

Lohri is one of the major festivals of Punjab. It is also celebrated in other region of North India. This crop festival of Punjab marks the end of winter. Children go singing from door to door and collecting lohri, which includes munchies and savories. The collection is then thrown into the bonfire in the evening and distributed among the people gathered around the bonfire, singing and dancing.

Lohri is a festival of Sikhs community who are known for their delicious food habits in North India, that is why they are particular about what they eat thus making Lohri recipes very special. Lohri is considered to be the end of winter season that is why the occasion of Lohri is more than a festival; it is a good symbol for the farmers. This is the reason behind the best cuisine.

A tradition is to share moongfali and rewari is mandatory, including specific foods that will later be thrown into the bonfire in the center of the gathering. All the Lohri special recipes are easy to cook at home kitchen and they can also purchased from market.

The festival of Lohri offers a great opportunity for Sikhas of Punjab and all North Indians to enjoy the traditional delicacies that are cooked using the traditional recipes. These



years old traditional recipes have been passed on from generations to generations. These special recipes provide a great opportunity to discover and taste the delicacies of Indians. On the occasion of this festival everybody is allowed to forget about their health related problem and enjoy the rich and delicious food and sweets to fullest.

Sweets are also having their special place on this occasion. Lohari is incomplete without sweets that are very easy to cook at home. These sweets are added attractions to the festive mood of Lohri. It is well known for offering sweets that are a must eat during this period. A must eat because as one goes from home to home wishing people on this festival as it is considered a omen to offer sweets to the well wisher and the symbol of happiness could be presented.

Baisakhi:

Baisakhi is considered as Punjabi's New Year day. It is observed in Mid April after harvesting. People rejoice by singing, dancing and offering prayers along with the first harvested crop to the Gods and Goddesses.

This festival refers to the celebrations of completion of the harvest season in Punjab. Sarson ka Saag and Makki ki Roti are the most sought after meal people enjoy.

Teej, Haryana:

Teej is one of the major festivals celebrated by the people of Haryana with great fervor. According to Hindu calendar, it is celebrated during the month of Sawan that is in between July and August. The significance of this festival is welcoming the month of Sawan that brings in rain. They worship Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati during this festival. The female folk in the state enjoy the festival of Teej more than men. They wear dupattas of red and pink colors ornamented with golden thread. They also apply mehendi on their palms and swing all through the day while singing.

There are a lot of homemade desserts used to consume on the occasion of this festival. In this season Ghevar is most popular among all dishes. Ghevar is made in solid steel moulds that are immersed in boiling hot oil. Once you drop the batter into the moulds, you'll see beautiful bubbles appear on top. You'll soon see them browning and once they're absolutely crisp, pull them out.

Malpua is a popular pancake-like dessert. The batter, made with flour and semolina, is



pan-fried in desi ghee and soaked in saffron-scented sugar syrup. If you want a more authentic experience, then you can also deep-fry the batter.

A special fruity version of the all-time favourite Indian sweet, this kheer is really easy to make. Rice is cooked in milk and saffron, blended with mango puree and mint leaves and garnished with nuts.

This is probably one of the easiest north Indian desserts. Take some milk, desiccated coconut, khoya, cashew and almonds. Roll them out, refrigerate for a bit if need be and serve.

Vermicelli or seviyan are fried in ghee, combined with milk, khoya and saffron and loaded with nuts to make this extravagant dessert.

Lathmar Holi, Barsana:

One of the unique festivals in India is the Lathmar Holi, which is celebrated in Barsana, Uttar Pradesh. According to belief, Krishna used to visit Barsana from Nandgaon to play Holi with Radha and her friends. The Gopis later chased Krishna and his friends. They used to beat them with bamboo sticks or lathis so carrying the tradition, the village women chase and beat the men coming from Nandgaon to Barsana. Know the different ways of celebrating Holi.

Holi is considered incomplete without some traditional foods some of them are traditional while other are modified. Dahi Wada Made with urad dal and moong dal, is considered the ritual on such auspicious occasion. This dish is cooked by the method of deep fried dumplings that are soaked in thick yogurt and topped with red chilli. A garnish is made up of chat masala and cumin powder along with tangy tamarind chutney. The preparation of this dish gives sweet, sour and salty taste.

Another popular dish is malpua, which is made up of made all purpose flour, milk and sugar with deep fried method and has a strong flavour of cardamom. It can also give a better deliciousness by adding with sweet khoya. This royal sweet recipe has been prepared since Mughal era.

Another favourite dish is Moong Dal Kachauri, which is Spicy and crunchy. It is made with soaked moong dal sauteed with black pepper, garam masala and coriander powder. This goes well with spicy aloo curry.



Gujiya is a sweet dish and very popular in this region, which is made with semolina, khoya, dry fruits and powdered sugar. This deep fried sweet dish is world famous and is known for the richness of nutrients.

Bhang Thandai is a Holi special drink considering a parsad for the matures on the occasion. This simple looking drink is packed with the goodness of milk, dry fruits and spices. With the temperature rising steadily, escalate the spirit of Holi and let the Bhang flow.

Magh Mela, Uttarakhand:

The Magh Mela is held in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand during Sankranti. It is another important festival of North India.

Thus, alike numerous locales of India, the prime staple food is rice. However, the residents of the Pahari region prefer lentils. Food items like 'bhatt' a type of soybean, 'kulath' or rust brown gahat, 'badis' or humongous spheres of dried urad dal and 'mangodi' prepared in an identical fashion using moong dal instead are local favorites that aid the occupants to combat the spine-chilling winters. Other favorites are mundua and linguda. The cooking medium frequently used is either ghee or mustard oil.

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